



ZhytomyrIvanFrankoStateUniversity Journal.
Philosophical Sciences. Vol. 2(90)

Вісник Житомирського державного
університету імені Івана Франка.
Філософські науки. Вип. 2(90)

ISSN: 2663-7650

UDC11:130.3:172

DOI 10.35433/PhilosophicalSciences.2(90).2021.87-93

FREEDOM OF WILL IN METAPHYSICAL AND MODERN DISCOURSE

L. M. Safonik*

Metaphysics is undoubtedly one of the most complex branches of scientific knowledge. To this day, the subject of metaphysics continues to ignite scientific discussions. First of all, the scientific community of the seventeenth century faced the need to bring order to metaphysics. Up until the seventeenth century, the ontology was correspondent with metaphysics. Thus, the philosophical community of the seventeenth page appeared before the need to bring order to metaphysics, which was merged with ontology. R. Goclenius and J. Clauberg defined ontology as a science of being in general. G. Leibniz also talked about ontology. C. Wolff proposed to understand the ontology synonymous with the first philosophy (metaphysicageneralis), resulting in metaphysics being divided into general and particular. General metaphysics was based on the traditions of medieval scholasticism and German classical metaphysics (Schulphilosophie). C. Wolff, for example, points out that the subject of special metaphysics is God, the soul, and the world. Thus, the question of free will got into the realm of special metaphysics. The debate over free will be intensified in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Neurophysiologists, in agreement with psychologists, question the metaphysical discourse of free will. At the same time, it should be noted that the articulation of attention to the issue of free will date back to 1980, which is linked to a series of experimental studies by B. Libet, who found that the potential of the brain's readiness by one second exceeds the participants' awareness of their decision to act. Thus it could be assumed that free will is an illusion, the essence of which is that the brain decides to act before a person makes a conscious decision to take action. The scientific community is disturbed by the California professor's conclusion, the essence of which is that the brain decides to act before a person makes a conscious decision to take action. However, addressing the issue of free will is crucial because it made possible the formation of representative and discursive semantics of the European lifeworld and culture, with a particular aesthetic experience inherent to them with its primary tastes and perceptual orientations, prompting the projection of a cognitive-discursive and logical matrix that is common with others. Then the reasonable question arises: "How to act in such a situation"?

Keywords: metaphysics, discourse, freedom of will, human being.

* *ScD of Philosophy Sciences, Dozent of the Department of Philosophy
(Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv, Ukraine)
lidiysafonik@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-3525-9501

СВОБОДА ВОЛІ У МЕТАФІЗИЧНОМУ ТА МОДЕРНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

Л. М. Сафонік

У статті артикулюється увага, що метафізика безперечно є однією з найскладніших галузей наукового знання. Донині довкола предмету метафізики тривають наукові дискусії. Власне філософська спільнота XVII сторіччя постала перед необхідністю навести лад у метафізиці, яку ототожнювали з онтологією. Р. Гокленіус та Й. Клауберг визначили онтологію як науку про суще як суще. Зокрема Г. Лейбніц також веде мову про онтологію, а не метафізику. Х. Вольф запропонував розуміти онтологію синонімом першої філософії (*metaphysica generalis*). Таким чином метафізику розмежували на загальну та спеціальну. Загальнометафізика опиралася на традиції схоластики середньовічної доби та німецької класичної метафізики (*Schul philosophie*). Х. Вольф вказує на те, що предметом спеціальної метафізики є Бог, душа та світ. Отже, питання свободи волі потрапило у царину спеціальної метафізики. Дискусія щодо свободи волі з новою силою розгорілася наприкінці XX століття, яка була пов'язана з низкою експериментальних досліджень Б. Лібета, який дійшов висновку, що мозок швидше на долі мілісекунд вирішує діяти, перш ніж людина прийме свідоме рішення вжити заходів. Відтак припустили, що свобода волі - це ілюзія. Наукове співтовариство виявилось не зовсім підготовлене до такого висновку, оскільки метафізичний дискурс свободи волі уможливив формування репрезентативної та дискурсивної семантики європейського життєсвіту та культури, спонукаючи розгортання солідарної мисленнево-дискурсивної та логічної матриці, артикулюючись у властивих їм естетичному досвіді з його провідними сенсами та перцептивними орієнтаціями. Труднощі такого рішення полягають у тому, що донині нейрофізіологи суголосно з психологами піддають сумніву метафізичний дискурс свободи волі. Відтак виникає слушне питання: "Як бути у такій ситуації"?

Ключові слова: метафізика, дискурс, свобода волі, людське буття.

Introduction of the issue.

Metaphysics is undoubtedly one of the most complex branches of scientific knowledge. To this day, the subject of metaphysics continues to ignite scientific discussions. As a result of the distinction between metaphysics, the general and particular questions of free will fell into the realm of special metaphysics. At the same time, "for the father of modern metaphysics" (R. Descartes - L. S.), "general metaphysics" is no longer an area of ontology (as in Suarez) but rather epistemology. R. Descartes points out that particular metaphysics outlines the ontological gaps between body and soul, consciousness and brain, free will and necessity. The philosopher argues that "the essence of man is a thought, not in the soul". The task of R. Descartes and I. Kant was to provide metaphysics with scientific status. At the beginning of the twentieth century, general metaphysics was severely criticized by representatives of the philosophy of life, neo-Kantianism, and positivism. M. Scheler, M. Buber,

E. Lévinas, P. Ricoeur and others criticize metaphysics for talking about the present and the being but avoiding talking about the human being. Despite strong criticism, general metaphysics is still represented in neologism and neo-scholasticism. The modern scientific community is confused by the conclusion of B. Libet, who suggested that free will is an illusion.

The philosophy of F. Nietzsche is the discovery of the route to multiplicity existential meanings - the foundation of meanings of life, the establishment of ontological freedom and joy of life. It is emphasized that Nietzsche, for solving the problem of meaning in life, abandons from the old tradition of metaphysical duality of worlds. F. Nietzsche makes the correlation of phenomenon and meaning instead of making metaphysical dualism visibility of the nature and causation. It is summarized that due to the element of power in the will, the person has the hope for joy in being, as it is a servant, not a passive receiver of foreign values,

and is able to create the most existential meanings, values, and thus, fills the life with meanings.

At the same time, it should be noted that the articulation of attention to the issue of free will dates back to the 1980, which is linked to a series of experimental studies by B. Libet [5: 47–56], who found that the potential of the brain's readiness by one second exceeds the participants' awareness of their decision to act, thus it could be assumed that free will is an illusion. The scientific community is disturbed by the California professor's conclusion, the essence of which is that the brain decides to act before a person makes a conscious decision to take action. Considering that the discourse of free will is the foundation of the moral and legal foundations of European civilisation, based on a representative symbolic European aesthetic experience with its basic meanings, judgments and perceptual orientations has been carried out, our world built is, in particular, the way we want to see it today. In addressing the issue of free will not in its favour, we are called to re-describe the world, stating that the European discourse of free will has lost (loses) its universal demand, since it contributes in a certain way to a totalising function in thinking and being, creating a situation of illusory constitution. because human free will is only an illusion. To represent the dispute over the discourse of free will in the context of contemporary civilisation studies.

The theoretical conclusions that flow from the results of this study depend in particular on the personality of the interpreter, what he or she sees and interprets. A. R. Mele, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Florida, offers a new interpretation of the results of B. Libet's scientific experiment in his work "Free Will: Theories, Analysis, and Data". For the sake of solving the problem of free will, A. Mele proposes to make a clear linguistic and scientific

distinction between the terms urge, wish, and decision. According to the thinker, most people recognise that deciding to do something is significantly different from having the urge or desire to do something. For example, you may be prompted to shout at a colleague who annoys you, but you choose not to. And you may want a second serving of dessert, but decided to stick with one [6: 190–196].

The aim of the article is considering that the discourse of free will is the foundation of the moral and legal foundations of European civilisation, based on a representative symbolic European aesthetic experience with its basic meanings, judgments and perceptual orientations has been carried out, our world built is, in particular, the way we want to see it today. In addressing the issue of free will not in its favour, we are called to re-describe the world, stating that the European discourse of free will has lost (loses) its universal demand, since it contributes in a certain way to a totalising function in thinking and being, creating a situation of illusory constitution. because human free will is only an illusion. To represent the dispute over the discourse of free will in the context of contemporary civilisation studies.

Results and discussion.

Reductionists Susan Blackmore, Daniel Wegner, Bruce Hood, Dick Swaab, Vileanur Ramachandran, Paul, and Patricia Chogland, after all, Daniel Denet take a more categorical position than Libetski, reasoning that the brain does not imply any freedom, creating no freedom, only the illusion of consciousness. It should be emphasised that all reductionists in the free will are convinced atheists. At the same time, A. Mele, E. Namias, P. Walbrow, Th. Caucidis, L. Svendsen, J. Shepard, J. Bremer are confused by the idea that denying free will deprives man of ontological freedom. So it is useful to get acquainted with the work of well-known

Scandinavian philosopher, L. Svendsen "Philosophy of liberty" [4], believes that freedom is one of the most interesting phenomena of human existence. Liberty as a multidimensional philosophical phenomenon includes ontological, metaphysical, political and personal aspects. From the standpoint of the classical notions of free will defenders, we can conclude that this debate is even somewhat harmful because it undermines established legal and moral principles. Under the weight of this discussion, we can assume that the philosophical foundations themselves have been slightly shaken!

Nonetheless, the discussion of free will encourages philosophers to rethink the nature of the consciousness, physicality, and nature of the individual self. D. Swaab in "We are our brain" rightly states that "now brain research is not only a search for the causes of brain diseases but also a search for the answer to the question why we exist, what we are – in short, a search for ourselves". Moreover, in the opinion of E. Namias [2], a professor at the Georgia State University (USA), adds to his colleagues, noting that "until neuroscience solves the problem of consciousness, the ideas of free-will opponents will be very tempting, because if our brains do everything, then there is no work left for conscious thinking".

The importance of solving the mystery of how much a person is endowed with free will, and whether endowed with it at all, lays in the answer to the question of whether there is an inner world of man, whether the man is free in the world. It helps to understand how a person with post-traumatic syndrome or congenital genetic diseases is a person and how much such a person is responsible for their actions. Not surprisingly, such a debate was called the "fourth revolution", which prompts the emergence of new verbal discourses. D. Swaab [3: 23–24] is convinced that the brain is an "efficient information-processing machine" that

performs all the operations that drive us, and therefore "everything we think and do happens through our brains" [3: 27].

We agree that brain injury, among other serious illnesses, is threatening to lead to a radical change in the human personality, often prompting the destructive transformation of the human "I". M. Kaiku recalls a famous incident when, in 1848, Phineas Gage, transformed from a traumatic head injury, changed from a cheerful cheerful person into an "aggressive, brutal and selfish one". It has been experimentally confirmed that a cerebellum injury can deprive a person of vision; the temporal hemisphere injury of the ability of speech; thalamic injury causes memory loss and empathy. People with brain injuries experience deep depression and fear, they are tormented by emotional lability, sometimes aggression and tearfulness, which negatively affect their state. Interests of such a person decrease to one animalistic interest – to survive. Such an adult is related to a child who, in some places, is completely deprived of his or her freedom of will in a way "controlling one's passions", which is "the true progress of freedom" [1: 63].

Therefore, the traumatic state of the brain is undoubtedly characterised by destructive changes in neural connections, accompanied by vegetative-vascular disorders, paresis, convulsions, etc. A person who is left with the ability to assess the magnitude of a personal catastrophe, at some point, in awareness, consciously chooses to be, to fight for life. It is in this situation that the willpower prevents the person from immersing himself in the routine twilight. We don't think "our brains do everything for us", but its condition is crucial for our wellbeing. The tragedy of a human being with obvious destructive changes in neural connections is that he has little life alternatives. Brain injury seems to destroy the inner world of a person who becomes impoverished. We fully agree with M. Kaiku that brain

injury is "in part ... it takes away the autonomy of a person, that is, her ability to set goals, to strive for her achievement, to make her own decisions and to be responsible for them" [1: 65]. A severely ill person is forced to collect fragments of will, constituting the intention to get out of the abyss, which significantly helps to achieve positive dynamics in the recovery process. Probably in a critical situation, willpower (not freedom of will) plays a crucial role in the process of "collecting" a deformed "I", accelerating the overcoming of personal catastrophe.

Essential support significantly affects the process of brain regeneration. In particular, the brain's neuronal activity is influenced by intellectual experience and the capacity for empathy, which makes it possible to claim that the brain is actually my brain, not someone else's. The human brain throughout its life is capable of developing or degrading. Therefore, the brain of a physically strong person who is deprived of mental abilities, degrades, which is characterised by "empty" eyes and "lack of thought" on the face. The motivation of a person, intellectual autonomy, which is the result of advanced abstract thinking and analytical skills, the ability to feel astonishment and wonder, the ability to empathise, help a person to stay in the space of conscious life. Therefore, in the process of painstaking intellectual work, we shape our brain and develop it. It is the basis of our conscious "I" because in the unconscious state, "I" seems to "hang". Through conscious "I" we make ourselves a person capable of creating symbols, signs, phenomena, and meanings. Moreover, it is interesting to watch the reactions of the brain at the moment of self-sacrifice, when the instinct of self-preservation breaks down.

Conclusions and research perspectives. The possibility to choose willingly above all presumes the ontosocial preconditions for its realization since social and discursive forms of

domination, and pride are a factor in humiliation and violence against another person. It is carried out through the dispersion of the semantic horizon of human beings, provoking its metaphysical subsidence, which leads to a sense of absurdity and loss of the meaning of life. At the same time, true freedom of choice is not limited to selfish impulses, but is motivated by a reflexive precaution against moral nihilism, individual and group narcissism, and, therefore, concerns the elevation of the meaning of responsible life, beyond the empirical limitations of a selfish sense and comfort.

It is believed that human freedom of choice fully manifests itself in the sense-constituting activity of man, which is determined by the evolutionary needs of increasing individual freedom, as a non-entropic condition for the growth of the creative potential of social life. It involves the formation of conscious sense-understanding of the context, phenotype representational-symbolic, and discursive-semantic messages. At the same time, the weight of the "freedom of will" construct is that it has enabled the formation of these semiotic-epistemic contexts of European life and culture, and the development of a common thinking-discursive and logical matrix. The attempt to deconstruct the principle of free will testifies to a certain fever of modern intellectual discourse, threatening humanitarian catastrophe.

Neurophysiological studies have somewhat shaken the known position of philosophers. We can say that philosophers are at a crossroads in solving this complex issue. For the most part, philosophers adhere to the position of E. Namias, who states that scientists who insist that free will is only an illusion mislead us, but agree that ... conscious control of our actions is much weaker than we seem. So the freedom of will is significantly less potent than we thought before. Undoubtedly, philosophers understand that modern

brain research makes it possible for humanity to look at the world with other eyes, especially to overestimate the status of a marginalized people in society, objecting to some of the fears and prejudices around them.

Contemporary life compels people to seek new existential support, which takes the human mind beyond the limits of verbal metaphysical practices and converts them to the quest for the authenticity of life, thus contributing to overcoming the futility of many life-changing problems and situations. At the same time, intellectuals must answer the question of whether they are ready to abandon the representational-symbolic and discursive-semantic practices of European life and culture. Currently, informative-narrative and discursive forms of domination arrogant pride remain factors of the humiliation of human dignity and violence. It is carried out through the pulverization of the semantic horizon of human existence, thus leading to a sense of absurdity, nihilism, and loss of meaning in life. At the same time, true freedom of choice is not limited to selfish motives and impulses but is conditioned by a reflexive alert against moral cynicism and narcissism. This testifies to the effectiveness of elevating the meanings of "responsible life" beyond the empirical limitations of selfish sense of meaning and the corresponding discursive-ethical practice of "comfortable cynicism". Thus, an attempt to frivolously deconstruct the concept of free will, rejecting both – freedom of choice and freedom itself may also indicate the feverish nature of intellectual discourse, threatening a humanitarian catastrophe.

LITERATURE

1. Кайку М. Майбутнє розуму. Наукові спроби осягнути, вдосконалити і підсилити інтелект [Текст]; пер. з англ. А. Кам'янець. Львів : Літопис, 2017. 408 с.

2. Намиас Е. "Научное исследование. Нейронауки. Существует ли свобода воли у человека?", 2015.: <https://intalent.pro/article/cushchestvu-et-li-svoboda-voli-u-cheloveka.html> (дата звернення 14.06.2020).

3. Свааб Д. Ми – це наш мозок. Харків: Клуб сімейного дозвілля, 2017. 496 с.

4. Свендсен Л. Фр. Г. Філософія свободи; пер. з норвезьк. Львів: Вид-во Анетти Антоненко; Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2016. 336 с.

5. Libet B. "Do We Have Free Will?", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1999. Vol. 6, N. 8–9, pp. 47– 56.

6. Mele A. R. "Free Will: Theories, Analysis, and Data", in Pockett S., Banks W. P. and Gallagher S., JG (Ed.), *Does Consciousness Cause Behavior*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 190–196.

7. Харрис С. "Свобода воли, которой не существует", 2015; <https://esquire.ru/archive/6514-sam-harris/> (дата звернення: 25.04. 2020).

REFERENCES (TRANSLATED & TRANSLITERATED)

1. Kayku M. (2017). *Maybutnye rozumu. Naukovi sprobny osyahnuty, vdoskonalyty i pidsylyty intelekt* [The Future of the Mind: The Scientific Quest to Understand, Enhance, and Empower the Mind] [Tekst]; per. z anhl. A. Kam'yanets'. L'viv : Litopys [in Ukrainian].

2. Namias, E. "Scientific Research. Neurosciences. Is there free will in humans?"; <https://intalent.pro/article/cushchestvu-et-li-svoboda-voli-u-cheloveka.html> (accessed 14.06.2020).

3. Swaab, D. (2017). *We Are Our Brains: A Neurobiography of the Brain, from the Womb to Alzheimer's*, Family Leisure Club, Kharkiv. 23–108 (in Ukrainian).

4. Svendsen, L. Fr. H. (2016). *Filosofiya svobody* [Philosophy of liberty]; per. z norvez'k. L'viv: Vyd-vo Anetty Antonenko; Kyiv, Nika-Center (in Ukrainian).

5. Libet, B. (1999). "Do We Have Free Will?", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 6, N. 8–9, 47– 56.

6. Mele, A. R. (2006). "Free Will: Theories, Analysis, and Data", in Pockett S., Banks W. P. and Gallagher S., JG (Ed.), *Does Consciousness Cause*

Behavior, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 190–196.

7. Kharris, S. (2015). "Svoboda voli, kotoroy ne sushchestvuyet" ["Free will, which does not exist"]: <https://esquire.ru/archive/6514-sam-harris/> (accessed: 25.04.2020).

Receive: June 08, 2021
Accepted: October 05, 2021